

New England Solar

Renewable Energy from ACEN

Social Investment Program

Guidelines

Social investment is our voluntary contribution to communities.

ACEN Australia's Social Investment Program (SIP) provides funding for initiatives and partnerships that contribute to building thriving and resilient communities and economies. Preference for funding is given to activities that deliver benefits in at least one of ACEN's value areas. Our approach to social investment is also aligned with the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals.

Who can apply

1. Groups within Uralla Shire, Dangarsleigh, Kelly Plains, and Anaiwan communities
2. Not-for-profit (NFP) organisations and charities (a not for profit organisation is an organisation that is not operating for the profit or gain, either direct or indirect of its individual members)
3. Incorporated community-based organisations
4. Social enterprises, including Indigenous organisations
5. Government entities and profit organisations where a project demonstrates a strong contribution to the local community

Demonstrating value

While each community is unique, our experience however tells us that benefit sharing and social investment must take place throughout the full project lifecycle, commencing at Development stage so that regional communities can actively participate in the benefits that a growing renewable energy industry can provide.



VALUE Community enhancement & resilience

FOCUS Activities enhancing communal lives, cohesion and resilience through improved access to technology and economic opportunities.



VALUE Education and work

FOCUS Activities providing or enhancing education, training and employment resources and opportunities.



VALUE Reconciliation

FOCUS Activities addressing Indigenous disadvantage, promote shared understanding, and respect for culture, and promote reconciliation.



VALUE Environment

FOCUS Activities supporting communities to improve environmental resilience and stewardship.



ACEN Australia's New England Solar SIP funding is allocated for the next 25+ years. Initial funding is for three years, via two streams, and will then be reviewed.

Stream 1

Grants, sponsorships and donations

2024 \$150K | 2025 \$150K | 2026 \$150K

- Funding available for groups within Uralla Shire, Dangarsleigh, Kelly Plains, and Anaiwan communities.
- Six monthly funding rounds by application
- Administered by ACEN Australia and a Community Reference Group

Stream 2

Future Fund

2024 \$150K | 2025 \$150K | 2026 \$130K

- Strategic, regional long term investments
- Focus on leveraging co-funding with other partners
- Administered by ACEN Australia
- Applications through invitation

Selection criteria

Community

- The activity directly benefits the community (in at least one of ACEN Australia's Social Investment value areas)

Sustainability

- The activity has good prospects of successful implementation and any long-term costs and maintenance have been planned for
- Where possible, other fundraising efforts or contributions from other funding providers have been secured

Risk

- Any risks associated with the activity have been considered
- The activity aligns with ACEN Australia's Vision Mission and Values

Equity and inclusion

- Funding will be accessible to a diverse range of groups and people and will not support initiatives that discriminate or disadvantage groups within the community

What we don't support

- Activities associated with Individuals or initiatives for personal gain
- General operating expenses that are part of an organisation's ongoing expenses
- Activities that are considered to be the core responsibility of government
- Private business, political or religious activities
- Activities solely focused on capital works
- Retrospective funding for activities that have already occurred
- Activities that involve significant inherent risks, such as extreme sports

Conditions

Successful applicants will be required to:

1. Use the funding for the specified activities
2. Sign a Funding Agreement provided by ACEN Australia

Community Reference Group

New England Solar has a Community Reference Group (CRG) comprising five panel members that represent the community in Uralla Shire and surrounds as broadly as possible. The CRG assesses SIP Stream 1 applications, to provide transparency and local insight to the allocation of SIP funding.

How to apply

Stream 1 grants, sponsorships and donations are administered biannually, with two rounds of applications and recipients each year. Applications for Stream 2 - for strategic, long-term investments - can be made at any time.

1 Eligibility and application

- Read the Guidelines (this document) to determine if your group and activity is eligible
- Complete the application form
- Email your application to the project team

2 Notification and execution

- Applicants notified in writing (via email) on the outcome within four weeks. Note in some instances, it may be necessary to obtain additional information from applicants to assist in the assessment
- For successful applications, a Funding Agreement will be issued via email to be signed and returned to ACEN Australia
- Upon receipt of executed Funding Agreement, an invoice must be submitted to ACEN Australia

3 Acquittal

- Within eight weeks of completion of activities, submit a completed Acquittal Form to ACEN Australia

These guidelines have been developed by ACEN Australia and are subject to modification from time to time. Funding is discretionary and determined by ACEN Australia.

Types of funding

Financial grants

Provided to underwrite the costs of specific projects or programs. Grants typically are provided to start something new, pay for important equipment or training, or undertake research. They are generally limited to a defined time period.

Sponsorships and donations

A sponsorship is an exchange in value. ACEN Australia provides financial or in-kind support and the organisation accepting the sponsorship provides a tangible and measurable return to our business such as media or community goodwill. Our sponsorships are based on the principle of reciprocity and align with our business risks and objectives. This means that aside from assisting community growth, these partnerships allow ACEN Australia to help improve the quality of life and liveability of the community.

A donation is a charitable gift to secure goodwill. There is no expectation of a return to the business. Donations should be linked to real and relevant issues that impact the whole community.

Partnerships

Partnerships are collaborative, ongoing relationships between ACEN Australia, Not-for-Profits and community service organisations and generally include a combination of financial and in-kind support. Partnerships are relationships aimed at achieving several goals that either partner would be unable to achieve on their own.